



Theatres Trust funds theatres of all sizes to carry out vital futureproofing projects

Theatres Trust, the national advisory and advocacy body for theatres, has awarded grants totalling £88,000 to 13 theatres in England, Scotland, and Wales through its Small Grants Programme supported by The Linbury Trust.

The Small Grants Programme funds not-for-profit theatres to deliver small-scale interventions that make a big impact to the venue's resilience, sustainability, accessibility, or the diversity of its audiences. The scheme supports theatres of all sizes to carry out small, practical projects that will help them thrive in the future.

From small, amateur-run community spaces, to larger, professionally operated venues, recipients in this latest round demonstrate the range of theatres benefiting from the Small Grants Programme. **Grimsby Auditorium**, a 2000-capacity venue in Lincolnshire, has secured funding to install a portable wheelchair lift in its main theatre. The new lift will replace the existing loading ramp to provide performers with a safe and independent way to access the stage. At the opposite end of the scale, funding will also support **Lower Marsh Arts Club**, a 50-seat fringe theatre in London, which has been awarded a grant for a full electrical rewiring and lighting upgrade. The switch to modern, more efficient electrics and lighting will reduce energy usage and keep maintenance costs down in the long term.

Other theatres receiving funding in this round include **Everyman Theatre** in Cheltenham, the National Youth Theatre's **Workshop Theatre** in London and **The North Wall Arts Centre** in Oxford. These theatres will use their grants to improve the accessibility of their buildings or productions meaning more people can experience, and participate in, live performances.

Funding will also support energy-saving environmental sustainability initiatives at **Poynton Players Theatre** in Cheshire, **Merlin Theatre** in Frome, **The Lace Market Theatre** in Nottingham, **The Seagull Theatre** in Lowestoft, **The Witham** in County Durham and **Turret Theatre** in Kirkintilloch.

The final two grants will support theatres with projects that improve their future viability and resilience. **National Dance Company Wales** has been awarded funding

to upgrade the front-of-house toilets at The Dance House, its 100-seat studio theatre, to make its facilities more inclusive and welcoming. **South London Theatre** will use its grant to install new wireless networking equipment which will help streamline daily operations and open-up new opportunities to experiment with digital programming.

Theatres Trust CEO Joshua McTaggart comments *This latest round of the Small Grants Programme reflects the breadth of theatres across the nation benefitting from vital investment in their futures. From grants supporting energy saving projects at small amateur theatres to accessibility improvements at large-scale regional theatres, the impact of this funding will be felt right across the sector. Theatres Trust is pleased to see the innovative ways theatres of all scales and styles are responding to today's most pressing challenges and we are delighted to be able to support them in working to secure inclusive, sustainable, and viable futures.*

Stuart Hobley, Director, The Linbury Trust comments *Theatres across the land play such a key role in local life. And these grants will help so many more to thrive and be valued by everyone in the community.*

The next round of the Small Grants Programme is currently open for applications with a deadline of 12pm Friday 15 January.

Notes to Editors

Website	https://www.theatretrust.org.uk
BlueSky	@theatretrust.bsky.social
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Instagram	@theatretrust
Photo	Courtesy of Grimsby Auditorium

Small Grants Programme Round 11 Recipients

The Dance House (National Dance Company Wales), Cardiff, £7,500

Home to the National Dance Company Wales, The Dance House is a 100-seat studio theatre which doubles as a rehearsal space and workshop for its repertory company. The theatre is situated within the wider Wales Millenium Centre complex and plays an important role in Cardiff Bay's cultural offer. The grant will fund improvements to the front-of-house toilets and support the creation of two new gender-neutral cubicles. Improving the toilets will make the theatre a more inclusive and welcoming space by providing a better experience for visiting companies and

audiences. Investing in better facilities will also support the theatre with its wider ambition to grow as a presenting venue for small and mid-scale touring companies.

Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham, £7,500

Designed by eminent theatre architect Frank Matcham in 1891, the Grade II listed Everyman Theatre is Cheltenham's largest theatre and an important venue for touring work in the wider south west region. The grant will go towards upgrading the ageing mechanisms of two, button-operated automatic doors at the front of the theatre. The newer, modern mechanisms will make the doors safer and more reliable, improving access for audiences, artists, and workers.

Grimsby Auditorium, £7,500

Grimsby Auditorium is north east Lincolnshire's principal large-scale live performance venue and a significant cultural landmark for local people. The grant will go towards the purchase and installation of a portable wheelchair lift to provide performers with safe and independent access to the stage. The new lift will replace the existing steep loading ramp which performers often require assistance to use. Providing better means of access to the stage will make the theatre a more inclusive and welcoming space where a broader range of artists can perform and new productions can be programmed.

The Lace Market Theatre, Nottingham, £7,000

The Grade II listed Lace Market Theatre is an independent amateur theatre located in Nottingham's historic textile-quarter. The theatre will use its grant to replace the ageing and inefficient boiler used to heat the dressing-room, green-room, and storage space. Electric convector radiators will be installed to replace the boiler meaning the theatre can disconnect entirely from its gas supply, drastically reducing energy usage and operating costs. The electric convector radiators will also be able to connect to the building's control system giving the theatre greater oversight of its energy usage than before.

Lower Marsh Arts Club, London, £7,197

Lower Marsh Arts Club is an LGBTQ+ friendly 50-seat fringe theatre in London that provides a platform for emerging artists to showcase work-in-progress in a safe and vibrant creative space at affordable rates. The grant will fund the full rewiring of the theatre and upgrade of the lighting system. The switch to modern, more efficient electrics and LED lighting will not only improve the theatre's environmental sustainability but will also offer a greater range of technical capabilities and creative flexibility for staging performances. The upgrade will reduce associated energy and maintenance costs helping to ensure performances and artistic opportunities remain affordable and accessible.

The Merlin Theatre, Frome, £7,500

The Merlin Theatre in Frome, Somerset, is a community theatre staging work by local performers, young people, and emerging artists as well as professional touring productions. The grant will support the theatre to replace its current dimmer rack with a newer, more flexible system. The power constraints of the existing rack are preventing the theatre from transitioning to a full LED lighting rig, which is more energy-efficient than other conventional forms of stage lighting. The upgrade means the theatre can now begin to install LED lights alongside its existing lantern stock while it works towards replacing the full rig, helping the theatre achieve its goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

The North Wall Arts Centre, Oxford, £6,306

Built on the site of a Victorian swimming pool, The North Wall Arts Centre in Oxford's Summertown is a multi-disciplinary venue with a 200-capacity theatre and additional smaller studio spaces. The grant will go towards the purchase and installation of live captioning equipment in the main theatre to improve accessibility for D/deaf, deafened, and hard-of-hearing audiences. Purchasing rather than renting captioning equipment, as it had done previously, will enable the theatre to programme more captioned performances and events, deepening its commitment to access and inclusion.

Poynton Players Theatre, £7,500

Poynton Players Theatre has been entertaining local communities in the Cheshire town since 1949. The 106-capacity venue is run by an amateur dramatics society that stages live productions by, for, and with the local community. The grant will fund the installation of solar panels on the roof of the theatre meaning it can produce its own renewable energy. Not only will this improve the theatre's environmental sustainability, but it will also lower day-to-day operating costs, helping to keep ticket prices affordable and support long-term viability.

The Seagull Theatre, Lowestoft, £7,500

Located in Pakefield near Lowestoft in Suffolk, The Seagull Theatre is a small community venue working with vulnerable and underserved groups in its local area. The grant will contribute towards the cost of installing solar panels on roof so that the theatre can generate its own renewable energy. The new solar panels will improve the theatre's environmental sustainability while lowering operating costs. This means the theatre can invest the money it currently spends on energy back into its programming, ensuring that high-quality live performance experiences remain accessible and affordable to local audiences.

South London Theatre, £4,553

Founded in 1967, South London Theatre is a repertory style community theatre based in a Grade II listed former fire station in West Norwood. The grant will fund improvements to the theatre's existing digital infrastructure which is now no longer sufficient to support the organisation as it grows. New wireless networking equipment will provide reliable connectivity to all areas of the building making daily operations more efficient and support the theatre's longer-term ambition of creating more digital and hybrid work.

Turret Theatre, Kirkintilloch, £4,365

Home to one of the oldest amateur dramatics groups in Scotland, Turret Theatre in Kirkintilloch is an intimate 60-capacity venue situated on the ground-floor of a converted residential building and former Liberal Club. It is the only theatre in its town and plays an important role in its local community. The grant will fund the replacement of existing halogen stage lighting with more energy-efficient and cost-effective LEDs. It will also cover the cost of a new digital sound mixing console to replace the current system which has become unreliable and difficult to operate. Replacing outdated sound and lighting systems with newer, more energy-efficient upgrades will support the theatre's wider environmental sustainability efforts.

The Witham, County Durham £7,000

The Witham is a Grade II listed arts centre in Barnard Castle. It serves the wider rural areas of Teesdale and as the largest and best equipped theatre locally, it provides performance facilities unavailable in most nearby village halls. The grant will fund the purchase and installation of LED lighting equipment for the theatre's main performance space. This upgrade will help the theatre cut energy usage and keep costs down ensuring the theatre can continue to serve nearby rural communities.

The Workshop Theatre (National Youth Theatre), London, £7,500

The Workshop Theatre in London is a 250-capacity studio theatre and home of the National Youth Theatre; the first theatre group of its kind specifically created for young people. The theatre will use its grant to improve access to The Production Base, an area of the building dedicated to technical skills training, by installing two new automated door systems that enable wheelchair users to move through the space unassisted. The new system will also improve access for performers during shows as The Production Base is used as an underpass for the main studio theatre above.

The Small Grants Programme

The Small Grants Programme funds small projects that make a big impact to a theatre's resilience, sustainability, accessibility or improving the diversity of audiences. This scheme provides grants for essential works to enable not-for-profit theatres across the UK to be viable and thrive in the future.

It was launched in 2021 with the generous support of The Linbury Trust, which has since renewed its funding twice, with the current scheme running until 2028. The scheme receives additional support from The Mackintosh Foundation and has received support by Charles Michael Holloway Charitable Trust.

Theatres Trust

Theatres Trust is the national advice and advocacy body for the UK's theatres supporting all forms of theatres, whether old or new, commercial, subsidised or community-run. We protect theatres and champion the future of live performance by advising and supporting our nation's theatres to develop best practice in design and management following the four principles of resilience, environmental sustainability, inclusivity and placemaking.

The Linbury Trust

The Linbury Trust is an independent grant-making Trust established in 1973 by Lord Sainsbury of Preston Candover, and his wife Anya, Lady Sainsbury CBE. The Trust has awarded almost £250m in grant funding across the world, supporting a wide variety of work including public engagement with arts and culture through education, training and wellbeing; connecting people with our natural environment, and mitigating climate change; and programmes that improve the choices of people experiencing disadvantage and inequality.

www.linburytrust.org.uk

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